

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: PINT PO
SUBJ: ANTONIO BARRETO AND MEDEIROS FERREIRA RESIGN FROM PS

1. TWO CONTROVERSIAL MEMBERS OF THE FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED JOINTLY SEPTEMBER 6 THEIR REQUESTS TO RESIGN FROM THE SOCIALIST PARTY. THEY WERE: ANTONIO BARRETO, FORMER MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES; AND MEDEIROS FERREIRA, EX-FOREIGN MINISTER. THE PS ACCEPTED THE RESIGNATIONS. BOTH MEN SAID THEY WOULD ALSO RESIGN AS DEPUTIES (RATHER THAN REMAIN IN THE ASSEMBLY AS INDEPENDENTS) WHEN THE ASSEMBLY FINISHES DEBATE ON THE NOBRE DA COSTA GOVERNMENT PROGRAM.

2. IN AN EXPLANATORY LETTER WHICH THEY RELEASED TO THE PRESS, BARRETO AND MEDEIROS FERREIRA CRITICIZED THE SOCIALIST PARTY FOR ITS:
--PRESENT POLITICAL ORIENTATION, WHICH THEY LABELED "NEGATIVE FOR THE PURSUIT OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST IDEALS AND HARMFUL TO THE INTERESTS OF THE PARTY ITSELF";
--LACK OF DESIRE FOR SERIOUS INTRA-PARTY DEBATE ON IMPORTANT QUESTIONS;

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--PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THEM, WHICH COST BARRETO AND MEDEIROS FERREIRA PRESTIGE IN BOTH THE PARTY AND THE ASSEMBLY. BARRETO AND FERREIRA SAID THEY WOULD NOT BE FORMING A POLITICAL PARTY AT THE PRESENT TIME.

3. IN REMARKS TO THE PRESS LATER, PS NATIONAL SECRETARY JORGE CAMPINOS EXPRESSED NO SURPRISE OVER THE RESIGNATIONS

AND ADDED THAT FOR SOME TIME BOTH BARRETO AND MEDEIROS FERREIRA HAVE FAILED TO ATTEND PARTY MEETINGS AND HAVE ASSUMED POSITIONS CONTRARY TO THOSE REACHED DEMOCRATICALLY WITHIN THE PS.

4. COMMENT: BARRETO AND MEDEIROS FERREIRA HAVE LONG BEEN EXPECTED TO RESIGN FROM THE SOCIALIST PARTY OR TO BE ASKED TO LEAVE. THEY HAVE PUBLICLY CRITICIZED THE PARTY AND MARIO SOARES, AND HAVE ALSO BEEN LINKED WITH PEOPLE FAVORING A PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM. THE RESIGNATIONS ARE A FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT TO THE PS WHICH IS GOING THROUGH ITS MOST DIFFICULT PERIOD SINCE 1975. BY REMAINING IN THE ASSEMBLY UNTIL THE END OF DISCUSSIONS ON THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM, BARRETO AND MEDEIROS FERREIRA THREATEN TO UNDERMINE PS EFFORTS IN THE DEBATE.
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